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Letter dated 15 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward the attached text of a government statement on the third meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee on the Lomé Peace Agreement, dated 13 May 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibrahim M. **Kamara**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Office of the President
Government Statement on the 3rd meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee on the Lomé Peace Agreement held in Freetown, Saturday, 13 May 2000

1. At the meeting convened by the Chairman of the Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 2 March 2000, and attended by the Heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, obstacles impeding the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement were identified, and parties to the Agreement, together with the international community, were urged to take certain measures to remove those impediments. Those measures included the following:

(a) Immediate removal by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of obstacles to the development of UNAMSIL;

(b) Immediate return by RUF of the large quantities of weapons and military equipment seized from the Guinean troops, as well as the immediate return by RUF and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/Sierra Leone Armed Forces (AFRC/SLA) of the weapons seized from the Kenyan troops;

(c) Simultaneous removal of all road blocks throughout the country by all combatants;

(d) The acceleration of the establishment of more disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) centres once UNAMSIL deploys, and the exploration of new imaginative ways of funding the DDR;

(e) No Party has the right to claim any part of the country as its fiefdom.

2. Since that meeting the Government has taken the following measures:

(a) Intensified formal and informal contacts with the RUF leadership, including extending invitations to RUF to attend important national and international events taking place in Sierra Leone. For example, the Meeting of Ministers of Security, Justice and Internal Affairs, held in Sierra Leone from 16 to 17 April 2000, and the Workshop on a National Security Policy Paper for Sierra Leone, on 21 and 22 March 2000, several informal and informal bilateral meetings between the Head of State and the leader of RUFP;

(b) Speeded up the disarmament of pro-Government forces, that is, the Civil Defence Force (CDF) and SLA, throughout the country;

(c) Had pro-Government forces remove roadblocks throughout the country until it was realized that, in addition to not fully complying with the decisions in the Bamako Communiqué, the RUF combatants were exploiting the compliance of the Government by attempting to occupy more territory;

(d) Nominated its representative on the Council of Elders, established under the Lomé Agreement;

(e) Passed legislation for the setting up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, while awaiting United Nations assistance towards the functioning of this Commission and the establishment of the Human Rights Commission.

3. The Government is therefore disappointed that RUF has refused to abide by the agreements reached at the Bamako meeting by the following actions:

(a) Stalling on the disarmament of its combatants;

(b) Continued obstruction of UNAMSIL deployment and performance of its duties in areas of RUF concentration;

(c) Retention of areas of control in the country, including the diamond-producing areas where there is now clear evidence that RUF has been mining and appropriating diamonds at an extensive scale;

(d) Smuggling arms and combatants into the city of Freetown with the intent of undermining law and order;

(e) Resuming its military campaign in several parts of the country, with the clear intention of taking over the Government by force;

(f) Preventing RUF ex-combatants from voluntarily disarming without orders from the leadership, orders which the leadership refuses to give;

(g) Severely punishing ex-combatants who disarm without orders;

(h) Conducting military action against United Nations peacekeepers for receiving and disarming RUF ex-combatants who voluntarily report to DDR centres to disarm and be demobilized, as well as destroying DDR centres where "unauthorized" RUF combatants are suspected to be housed;

(i) Abducting United Nations peacekeepers and seizing or destroying their armaments, ammunition, uniforms, personal belongings and their equipment;

(j) Shooting at a crowd of defenceless civilians with heavy weapons, killing 19 and wounding many others on 8 May 2000, for calling on RUF to release the abducted United Nations peacekeepers.

4. As a result of the RUF conduct stated in (j) above, the aggrieved civilians reacted by storming the residence of the RUF leader from where they were shot at, and chased him and some of his collaborators away. While some of the collaborators have been captured and held in safe custody by Government, the whereabouts of the RUF leader are still unknown to Government.

5. The resumption by RUF of an open military campaign, assault on United Nations peacekeepers, and the unprovoked slaughter of innocent civilians constitute grave violations of the Lomé Peace Agreement that must be effectively and promptly addressed before normal implementation of the Agreement can be meaningfully resumed.

6. In this regard, the Government is proposing as a way forward, that:

(a) RUF release all the United Nations hostages it is holding, together with their weapons, equipment and personal effects, in conformity with the Final Communiqué of the Summit of Heads of State Members of the Committee on Sierra Leone of the Lomé Peace Agreement adopted in Abuja on 9 May 2000;

(b) RUF return all the weapons and equipment seized from the Guinean contingents of UNAMSIL in February 2000;

(c) RUF relinquish control of Kono, Makeni, Magburaka and other areas to UNAMSIL and the Government, with immediate effect;

(d) RUF simultaneously with other combatant groups, submit all their ex-combatants for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration;

(e) The international community provide the needed resources to enable the Government to execute speedily credible programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

7. On its parts, Government is fully committed to meetings its obligations under the Lomé Peace Agreement, and is ready to resume implementation of the Agreement under auspicious conditions.